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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [ZI](#) [VM](#)

SUBJECT: DEMARCHE ON DEMOCRACY IN ZIMBABWE - GVN NOT WILLING TO
ENGAGE

REF: State 34009

¶1. (SBU) On March 20, Poloff met with MFA West Asia and Africa Department Southern Africa Desk Officer Cao Vu Mai to deliver reftel points on building international support for democracy in Zimbabwe. Poloff also left a copy of the Secretary's and Department Spokesman's statements. When asked for the GVN's position on the situation, Mai pointed out that Zimbabwe is far from Vietnam and that Vietnam does not have an embassy there. She hopes the African Union will help, since it is "their problem," but in the same breath said "it is up to the people of Zimbabwe to solve the problem themselves." She referred to remarks by South African President Thabo Mbeki that "the situation in Zimbabwe does not affect its neighbors" and that "problems in Zimbabwe should be solved by the Zimbabwe people themselves." South Africa, as a neighbor of Zimbabwe, should understand better than the GVN, added Mai. She also cited Russia and China's blocking of action on Zimbabwe at the UN, suggesting an international consensus on Zimbabwe is lacking, and the failure of African Union Chairman Kufuor to propose any concrete action. Poloff reiterated that the Government of Zimbabwe's actions violate its basic human rights obligations and that a strong, unified response by the international community could bring about positive change.

¶2. (SBU) Comment. In light of Vietnam's strong candidacy for a 2008-2009 seat on the UN Security Council, the GVN's reaction to the current situation in Zimbabwe indicates it will take some work to ensure that they "get it" when it comes to issues like this. End comment.

MARINE